

K-651

Circa 1880-1885

Downer House

Galena

Private

The Downer House is the last house in the row of buildings that extends almost unbroken northward along the west side of Main Street from the crossroads to Seminary Avenue. The large, tall Downer House is the dominant house in its area of the Galena streetscape. To the north are a vacant lot and the Galena cemetery. The house is a large, frame, 2-1/2 storey, 5-bay wide, frame Victorian Gothic Revival dwelling with two-storey rear wing that was built about 1880 by a Dr. Dulany and remodeled in 1949 to appear colonial. The central gable with lacey bargeboard, the dormer trim, the tall spire finials on central gable and dormer roofs, and the 5-bay Victorian porch were removed, among other changes. On the interior the plan was changed somewhat though the main section plan remains central-hall, with space altered on the south end, however. Some window changes were made and decorative details installed according to the colonial theme. The main stair is unchanged. During the 1970s additions were made to the rear gable-end of the wing. In spite of its "colonial" alterations during a period when there was little appreciation of Victorian architecture, its origins are unmistakeable. It is a large and comfortable house that is an interesting example of a merging of two disparate styles. An early twentieth-century photograph shows it to have been "high Victorian" in detail, though in form and plan it was representative of the most common type of large, frame Kent County vernacular Gothic Revival houses. It must have been a "showplace" of Galena during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. K-651

Magi No. 1506515604

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Dr. Dulany House; Dempsey Houseand/or common Downer House (preferred)

## 2. Location

street & number 145 N. Main Street (110213) 314 217/94 ☐ not for publicationcity, town Galena ☐ vicinity of congressional districtstate Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Harry T. & Darla H. Downerstreet & number telephone no.: 648-5529city, town Galena state and zip code Maryland. 21635

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber EHP 45street & number folio 745city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title date \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records city, town  state

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-651

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Downer House is the last house in the row of buildings that extends almost unbroken northward along the west side of Main Street from the crossroads to Seminary Avenue. To the north are a vacant lot and the Galena cemetery. The house is a large, frame, 2-1/2 storey, 5-bay wide frame Victorian Gothic Revival dwelling with two-storey rear wing that was built about 1880 and remodeled in 1949 to appear colonial. The central gable with lacey bargeboard, the dormer trim, the spire finials on central gable and dormer roofs, and the 5-bay Victorian porch were removed, among other changes. On the interior the plan was changed somewhat though the main section plan remains central-hall, with space altered on the south end, however. Some window changes were made and decorative details installed according to the colonial theme. The main stair is unchanged. Despite the alterations, it remains a house that is readily identifiable as dating from the Victorian period. During the 1970s additions were made to the rear gable-end of the wing.

(Continued)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. K-651

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Circa 1880-1885 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The large, tall Downer House is the dominant house in its area of the Galena streetscape. In spite of its "colonial" alterations during a period when there was little appreciation of Victorian architecture, its origins are unmistakable. It is a large and comfortable house that is an example of a merging at two disparate styles. An early twentieth-century photograph shows it to have been "high Victorian" in detail, though in form and plan it was representative of the most common type of large, frame Kent County vernacular Gothic Revival houses. It must have been a "showplace" of Galena during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Downer House was built between 1880 and 1885 for a Dr. Dulany, a Galena physician. In 1890 he sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Dempsey when they moved from Washington Territory in that year, where they had been early settlers near Ocosta when the area was opened for land-claims. They evidently returned to Galena because of Mrs. Dempsey's health. They bought this house to live in and what was called the Lynch Farm 1-1/4 miles from Galena for investment. The Dempsey family owned the house until its sale in the 1920s after Mrs. Dempsey's death to Mr. and Mrs. William LeCates. The next owners were Mr. and Mrs. John Fletcher Wilson, who remodeled and to some extent rearranged the house. They sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hall. Mrs. Hall, a widow after 1967, sold it to the Downers in 1972.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-651

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Margaret Q. Fallaw, Survey Consultant		
organization	County Commissioners of Kent County	date	July 31, 1986
	Historical Society of Kent County		
street & number	Courthouse	778-4600	
	Church Alley	778-3499	
city or town	Chestertown	state	Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

Both Victorian sections of this house were built at the same time, the wing behind the north portion of the main section. The professional responsible for the 1949 remodeling was F. Trevor Hogg, an architect from Centreville, Maryland. The present owners have the construction drawings he prepared.

The plan was and still is central hall in the main section, with access under the stair to the wing as well as to the rear porch, an unusual and convenient feature not often seen in these "standard" Kent County Victorian houses, in which wing access is possible only through a main-section room. The first-storey room south of the central hall was partitioned and the south chimney removed. A relatively small front room was created with bathroom and large closet behind, all accessible from the hall. The second-storey space above was also modified. There had been a large opening between the north parlor and the dining room, which is in the wing, either trimmed or, as is more likely for the 1880s, with large double doors. The opening was largely closed and a conventional door installed. Cornice and chair rail were installed in that parlor, and a stock millwork "colonial" mantel, with shelving and cabinets built at each side, necessitating shortening the end windows.

The exterior walls were originally covered with German shiplap weatherboard. During the 1970s it was covered with 4"- exposure gold-colored aluminum siding, although some weatherboard remains within the wing porch in the L between main section and wing. The one-storey wing the present owners added to the rear of the original wing is covered with Texture 1-11 plywood on the north side and wood shingles on the south side. They completely opened the back room of the first storey of the rear wing to the new lower addition. The old rear room remains a kitchen, however, though it is entirely remodeled, largely in 1949. At that time the kitchen's corner stair (northwest corner) was removed. On the second storey the large rear room may have been two rooms originally.

The main section originally had a chimney at the center of each gable end, within the wall. The south one is gone, but the present owners built a new corner fireplace in the southwest corner of the smaller south end room and installed a flue that exits in an artificial chimney. The north chimney remains, for the first-storey fireplace. It appears to have been rebuilt. It has a corbelled cap, out and in. The wing has one chimney, between the rooms that emerges through the roof ridge. It too has been rebuilt.

The main section was originally entirely built over a crawl space, with the rear wing having the cellar. However, in 1949 the area under the central hall was dug out and a cellar stair installed under the main stair with access to the rear cellar via the under-hall area. The foundation of the main section and wing is built of brick.

The roofs of all but the newest sections are covered with wood shingles, now in poor condition. The cornice is boxed, with built-in gutters that were retained from the original construction. The overhang on sides and ends is about 12-14". The cornice is deep and there are quite large cornice returns on the gable ends--about 24-28". These are original, as also the large

(continued)

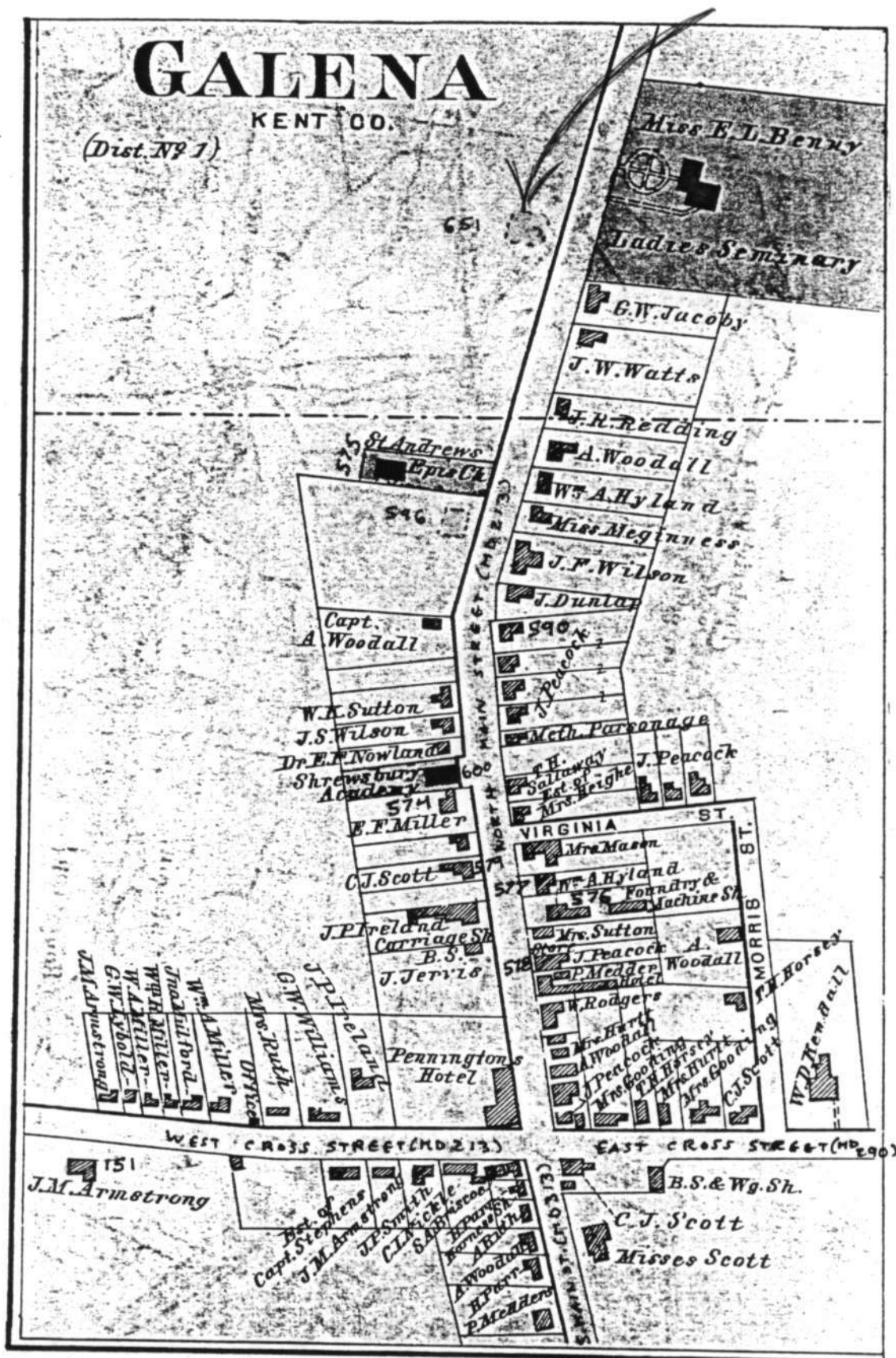
cyma-with-fillets crown molding may be. The bed molding is gone. Two dormers remain in the street facade; the central gable was removed. The dormers are positioned almost over the outermost windows below, but slightly toward the center. The dormer roofs are gable and steep with considerable overhang that is not boxed. The double-hung sash, with 2-over-2 lights and with upper sash triangularly pointed, is still in place. Though the filigree bargeboard and spires were removed, these are still clearly identifiable as Victorian Gothic Revival dormers.

A small, gable-roofed porch is now at the main entry, whose architrave has been entirely replaced by a door and sidelights with fan-light transom.

The windows are double-hung and tall, but the 2-over-2 sash are gone. In their places are sash with 9-over-9 lights; the new windows of the first-storey's north end have 9-over-6 lights. Though the sash was replaced, the trim appears to have been retained. It is 4" wide with an inside bead. The head trim is noticeably prominent, both at present and in an old photograph, where the feeling of a heavy lintel was conveyed. At the lintel there are additions to the plain trim: a plain cap above a cyma reversa molding with bevel. First storey shutters have fixed louvers above a single panel, with reproduction colonial shutter dogs. The second-storey shutters are entirely with movable louvers. All these shutters probably date from 1949.

The stair is a handsome Victorian catalogue one. It is open-string and dogleg, though most of the ascent precedes the landing, which also has access to the rear wing. Only several steps remain above the landing to the second-storey level. The newel is large and compoundly turned with compoundly round cap from which the molded rail rises. The balusters, two per tread, are compoundly turned Victorian balusters that are now painted. The stair is continuous to the third level.

In the old photograph consulted, a handsome picket fence was shown as being in the front of the house near the street. It is probable that most of Galena's Main Street houses had such fences, creating a quite different appearance from the open lawns there today.



# GALENA BUSINESS REFERENCES.

**GEORGE STEEL**, Manufacturer of, and Dealer in Pumps of all kinds. Also Repairing done at short Notice.

**GEO. T. MCCAULEY**, Dealer in Groceries and Provisions. All kinds of Salt Meats, Fish, Flour, Meal, Choice Cigars, Tobacco, &c., very low for cash.

**HENRY PARR**, Manufacturer and Dealer in Saddles, Harness, Whips, Trunks, Valises, &c.

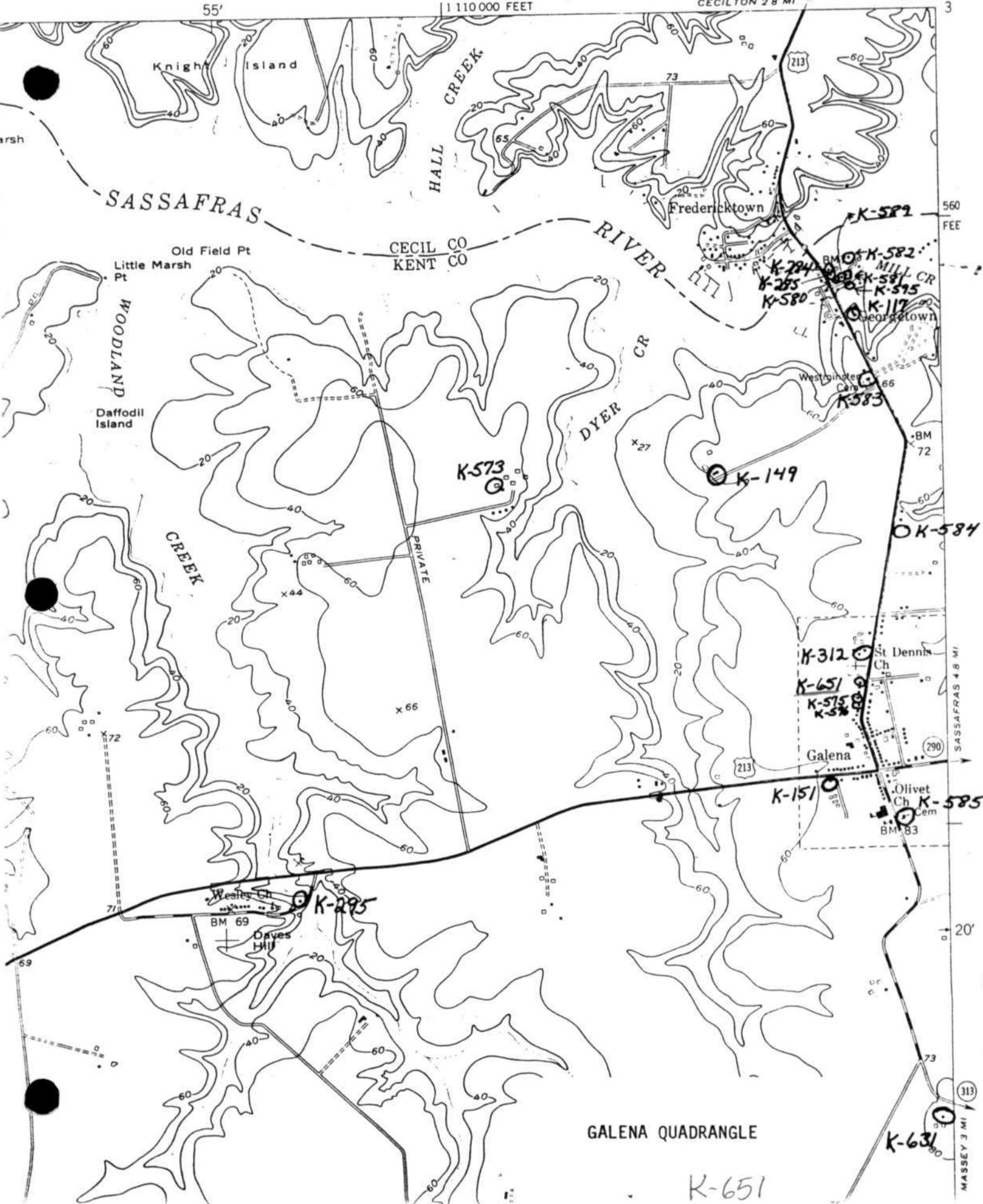
**G. W. WILLIAMS**, Blacksmith and Carriage-maker. Horse-shoeing and Repairing neatly and promptly done.

**G. W. LYBOLD**, Machinist and Engineer. Also Agent for Buckeye Reapers and Mowers and Sweep Stake Threshers, Eclipse Engine, Birdal Clover Huller, Ealien Rake and Agricultural Implements of all kinds. Engines repaired at short notice and reasonable terms.



55'

1110000 FEET



GALENA QUADRANGLE

K-651

MASSEY 3 MI



K651-2

K-651

Downer House

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 4/6/85

View to northeast





K-651-35

K-651

Downer House

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/2/86

View to west